

CAMINO
JRNLS

JUNE 1991
\$3.00/£2.00

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
CORREY LIBRARY
JUN 20 1991
PERIODICALS

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

**WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEW
WORLD ORDER?**

Paul M. Sweezy

MARXISM AND THE U.S. LEFT

Victor Wallis

U.S. AND CANADIAN LABOR

Martin J. Morand

VOL. 43

2

**Radical Versus Liberal
Environmentalism**

Michael Tanzer

LICENSED TO Michael Tanzer
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: What's New in the New World Order? by Paul M. Sweezy	1
MARXISM AND THE U.S. LEFT: THOUGHTS FOR THE 1990s by Victor Wallis	5
U.S. AND CANADIAN LABOR:	
CONVERGENCE AT WHOSE EXPENSE? by Martin J. Morand	15
THE BRITISH INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM, 1945-1946 by John Newsinger	29
A LITTLE HIROSHIMA IN PANAMA:	
AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. GUILLERMO COHEN-DEGOVIA	40
SOCIALISM IN THE 1990s: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? by Oliver S. Loud	45
CORRESPONDENCE:	
Two Comments on "Lessons to Be Learned" by Jack Weston	54
BOOKS:	
Radical Versus Liberal Environmentalism by Michael Tanzer	56

MONTHLY REVIEW (ISSN 0027 0520) is a publication of Monthly Review Foundation, a non-profit institution. It is published monthly except July and August, when bimonthly, and copyright © 1991, by Monthly Review. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes (Form 3579) to Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS:

122 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001. Telephone: (212) 691-2555.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. MR is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin, Historical Abstracts, America: History and Life, and the Alternative Press Index, P.O. Box 7729, Baltimore, MD 21218; tel.: (301) 243-2471.

NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION:

B. De Boer, Inc., 113 E. Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110; Armadillo & Co., 5795 W. Washington Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232; Small Changes, 3443 Twelfth Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119; Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London, E9 5LN, England.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

U.S.: One year \$25, students and senior citizens \$20; Foreign \$29; students and senior citizens \$22.

Libraries and Institutions: U.S. \$45; Foreign \$48.

Additional Postage: First Class (U.S. and Canada) \$15; Airmail: Foreign \$18.

EDITORS: Paul M. Sweezy
Associate Editor: W. H. Locke Anderson

Harry Magdoff
Assistant Editor: Joel Lefkowitz

Leo Huberman (1903-1968)
Circulation Manager: Martin Paddock

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Maybe we're crazy, but we don't think so. We don't see the Monthly Review enterprise (magazine and press) as merely one of a small number of producers of left publications in the United States. We see it as unique and uniquely important. In its 42 years of publication the magazine has led the way in defining and analyzing from a Marxist perspective the most important tendencies in domestic and global capitalism, the challenge to that system of "actually existing socialism" and its ultimate failure, the split of the capitalist world into center and periphery, and the dynamics of their interaction. MR Press has supported and deepened this work with crucially important book-length studies that have been translated into many languages and helped to keep Marxism a truly live and growing science of history and social change: Paul Baran's *Political Economy of Growth*, Andre Gunder Frank's *Development and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, William Hinton's *Fanshen*, Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital*, Harry Magdoff's

(Continued on inside back cover)

JUN 20 1991

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER?

by PAUL M. SWEEZY

One is tempted to respond that there's nothing new in the New World Order. There isn't even a new world order. And for that matter there isn't any world order at all.

On the other hand, it does make sense to speak of a new world disorder dating from the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of the Cold War. Before that the situation in the world, very schematically, was that there were two superpowers at the head of two blocs, the imperialist bloc, and the Soviet bloc, plus the third world. The third world was and still is basically dominated by and dependent on the imperialist bloc but has been in a state of chronic and fluctuating rebellion ever since the Second World War.

There were always conflicts and contradictions within the two blocs, but during the period of nuclear stalemate they were muted and under the control of the respective superpowers. From the beginning the United States arrogated to itself the task of keeping the third world in its place, while the Soviet Union gave limited and cautious support to third world rebellions as a tactic in its struggle with the opposing superpower. The result, of course, was a continuing series of wars, overt and covert, that began in China even before the end of the Second World War and have been going on ever since, with no end in sight.

This article is based on a talk given at the Socialist Scholars' Conference, April 1991.

That situation, I suppose, could have been called a world order of sorts. At least there was a kind of uneasy equilibrium among the major powers that fought in the Second World War, and it lasted for the better part of half a century.

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the Soviet Union's renunciation of its role as a superpower, all that changed. Some of the major developments that characterize the current scene are the following.

First, the Soviet bloc simply disintegrated, with the status of the component parts still being unsettled and unpredictable. Some are gravitating toward the imperialist bloc, others toward the third world. In the Soviet Union itself, the articulate sectors of the population are for the most part capitalist roaders, but the objective conditions are not present for a reconstruction of the society on capitalist lines. It may be a long time before we know what kind of a society is going to emerge and what part it will play on the world stage.

Second, in the imperialist bloc, the Cold-War glue that held it together for four decades is obviously losing its strength. There has not been and most likely will not be anything like the disintegration of the Soviet bloc: the various components all share a fundamental interest in preserving the imperialist system. But their relative strengths have been changing for a long time, with Japan and Germany gaining on the United States both industrially and financially. The arrangements of the Cold-War period are clearly outdated and obsolete; struggles to redefine the relations among these three top imperialist powers are developing and will be of crucial importance as far ahead as it is now useful to try to look.

Third, conditions in most parts of the third world have been deteriorating for at least the last decade, and any temptation to speak of stabilization, still less improvement, must be firmly resisted. But the elimination of the Soviet Union as a source of support for anti-imperialist struggles has been a serious blow to third-world aspirations, and it seems clear that for the present at least and perhaps for some time to come

the tide of rebelliousness in the third world will be at a low ebb compared to the norm during the cold-war period.

Such, in desperate brevity, is the state of the world in A.D. 1991. What are the implications for the United States?

To begin with, we should recognize that from the point of view of the U.S. ruling class—which I identify as the owners, representatives, and functionaries of American capital—there are both favorable and unfavorable aspects of the present situation. On the plus side is the Cold-War victory over the Soviet Union, which has been a central aim of U.S. policy ever since 1917. But this has its negative side, too. As we at *Monthly Review* have argued over the years, the relative prosperity of U.S. capitalism since the Great Depression of the 1930s has depended first on world war and after that on cold war. With the end of the Cold War, the country is threatened with a return to the 1930s. The question is starkly posed: what will take the place of the Cold War? The U.S. ruling class hasn't a clue, and as yet has not even given evidence of seriously thinking about the problem. Another negative is that the Cold-War constraints on rival imperialist powers have been loosened, and as Germany and Japan grow relatively stronger, the position of the United States at the top of the capitalist heap is bound to be increasingly challenged. How to counter this threat?

I suggest that both of these considerations—the need for a substitute for the Cold War and the rise of imperialist rivals—could only be perceived by the ruling class as requiring strong counteraction. From its point of view the very worst thing that could happen would be a long period of peace in which the powers would relate to one another as mere economic competitors. The leaders of the ruling class had no plan for forestalling the realization of this nightmare of peaceful competition.

And then out of the blue came Saddam Hussein—a godsend if ever there was one. The Gulf war was perhaps not a perfect answer, but it was about as close as could be expected in an imperfect world. And it had an added advantage. True,

the third world has been pretty quiet since the end of the Cold War, but who knows how long that will last? In the meantime, what could be more useful than repairing the tarnished image of a giant with feet of clay that the United States had received as a legacy of the Vietnam war? And for this purpose could anything be more effective than bombing a third world country back into the pre-industrial age?

The Gulf war, it seems, had it all. It set the stage for Bush's dream of a new world order in which the United States would once again be supreme over allies and enemies alike.

The only trouble is that it was just a dream. And now, hardly a month after the war ended, reality is coming into focus again. And we are beginning to understand that the reality we now face on both the domestic and international fronts is a lot worse than the reality of less than a year ago.

From time to time we, we receive a bequest from readers who want to help make possible the continued publication of Monthly Review as a completely independent socialist magazine. When drafting your will, please consider making a bequest to the Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27 Street, New York, New York 10001.

MARXISM AND THE U.S. LEFT: THOUGHTS FOR THE 1990s

by VICTOR WALLIS

The “death of Marxism,” widely celebrated in the capitalist press, could end up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Why is this the case, why does it matter, and what can be done about it?

1. Reports of death are exaggerated

For Marxism to be justifiably buried, capitalism would have to have found the secret of eternal life. Since capitalism is a system of social relations, such immortality would have to rest on something more than the capacity to overwhelm all challengers; it would require that capitalism be able to solve the problems that keep bringing new challengers into being.

None of the world’s recent changes have signified any progress in this direction. On the contrary, the gap between rich and poor is growing wider than ever, not only on a world scale, but even within many of the industrialized countries. Where this has not happened, it is only because of movements and measures embodying working class or socialist influence. Capitalist principles are moreover inherently ill-suited to confronting the environmental crisis; ecological rationality is simply incompatible with a commitment to growth, under whatever sponsorship.

Victor Wallis teaches political science at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, and is a long-time activist.

Capitalism's only hope for long-term survival seems to lie in its ever-resourceful pioneering in the means of destruction. This is not limited to the military suppression of socialist or nationalist challengers; it also includes the neutralization of autonomous community life through the anaesthetizing/atomizing effects of television, the drug trade, and gang warfare. The United States, bastion of global capitalism, generates enough surplus to be able to hold the entire world at gunpoint, while at the same time—domestically—topping all other countries in its per capita prison population.

In short, capitalism is as damaging as ever, and the longer it hangs on, the more dangerous it gets. The objective basis for Marxism—the systematic search for an alternative to capitalism—has therefore never been stronger.

2. Still, all is not well

But even as the need for a Marxist response grows, its political viability is increasingly being called into question. These two developments, although contradictory at one level, are by no means unrelated.

The most recent blow to Marxism's political viability has of course been the disintegration, in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, of the regimes claiming explicit adherence to its principles. Within the directly affected countries, the popular image of Marxism is understandably negative. What is more remarkable, however, and what I want to consider here, is how the notion of Marxism's bankruptcy has gained credence within progressive movements in the West, and most especially in the United States.

The reason this requires explanation is that the overwhelming majority of left activists in these countries have for a long time understood the Soviet regime and its offshoots to embody a clear departure from the democratic vision of working class rule that Marx expressed, for example, in his essay on the Paris Commune. Such a departure, however it might be accounted for, was never a sufficient reason for them

to abandon the socialist project from which the Russian Revolution had sprung. Why should the final unraveling of a “false start” prove more debilitating than its earlier institutionalization in a repressive bureaucratic regime?

The answer to this question must begin with the present-day political environment in the United States, and in particular with the would-be self-fulfilling prophecy that I mentioned at the outset. The “death of Marxism” campaign entails a replication in the ideological sphere of what capitalism has been steadily accomplishing in the material sphere, namely, the destruction of any potential alternative system.*

The ideological counterpart to capitalism’s military-economic arsenal is its control over the mass media: a control which largely delimits the vocabulary of the left’s political outreach. Phrases like “the collapse of Communism,” “the death of Marxism,” and “the failure of socialism,” taken as being interchangeable, are repeated so often and so automatically that they attain the status of axioms. Any suggestion that their message might be misleading requires the kind of lengthy explanation which threatens to turn people off.

The cycle is then complete: capital proclaims Marxism’s death; ordinary people take it for granted; left activists are loath to challenge them; Marxism atrophies even among the activists; and finally, Marxism is dead.

3. Where the treatment needs to begin

If this cycle is to be broken, it must be among those organizers and activists whose first question is likely to be, “Why should it matter? We’re against domination, oppression, and injustice. Why should we care about Marxism?”

The answer has both theoretical and historical dimensions. The theoretical part can be put quite simply, although

* For a more extensive discussion of this and related points, see Victor Wallis, “Marxism in the Age of Gorbachev,” *Socialism and Democracy*, no. 11 (September, 1990).

it may offend the pragmatic sensibility that much of the U.S. left inherits from its surroundings. Marxism is important because instead of just dealing with oppression on a case-by-case basis, or even with all the forms of oppression at once, it deals with the *totality* of oppression in all of its interrelationships.

Organizers might be tempted to respond scornfully to such quasi-religious terminology, but it is not without a rather compelling practical justification of its own. While totality might seem like a foreign concept to the various oppressed groups in capitalist society, organized as they are in distinct unions, rights groups, and community organizations, it is in no sense foreign to the structure against which these groups are trying to press their demands. The demands may be formulated separately, but if they reach high enough, they all confront the same antagonist at the top. This antagonist may not use the language of totality, but there is no sector of society and no major social issue on which it does not try to impose its priorities.

The antagonist in question is the capitalist class, or what Marx often referred to simply as capital. The totality in question is the entire complex of economic, military, and cultural instruments over which this class presides. The interactions among these instruments—or between any one of them and its popular challengers—are fluid but by no means random. We are dealing with a system that can distinguish among the various demands made upon it: accepting more readily—and coopting or reversing more easily—those that do not impinge upon class power.

This brings us back to Marxism's historical dimension. Individual or universalistic denunciations of injustice go back to ancient times; each form of human oppression can trace a long lineage. But neither the wisdom nor mercy of powerful individuals (or deities) nor the supposed common reasonableness of humankind as a whole has ever made a dent in any overall pattern of oppression. What has made a difference has been the self-organization of the oppressed, and

the most enduring forms of such self-organization—from which the others have largely derived—have been along class lines. The impetus to such long-term self-organization was first provided by capitalism, which in turn was directly threatened by it. Consequently, the self-organization of the oppressed—beginning with the industrial working class—could not occur without eliciting an alternative vision for society as a whole.

The formulation of this vision, however, emerged directly from a structural analysis of the oppressive system in its entirety. As the system evolved—intensifying, mitigating, or highlighting the various particular forms of oppression—the analysis and the vision could evolve accordingly. What would remain would be the *links* between system on the one hand and analysis and vision on the other. This is the discovery that has come to be permanently connected with Marx's name. To reject it is to settle for a merely spasmodic response-mechanism to the framework imposed by capital.

4. Class and other oppressions

One of the most common arguments put forward by non- or anti-Marxist advocates of social justice is that Marxism wrongly elevates class oppression above oppression grounded in other traits—most notably, race and gender.

I would like to think that we can change the terms of the argument from one of comparing oppressions to one of considering how all of them can be overcome. The basic point that we come back to is that the various forms of oppression are interrelated and mutually reinforcing within a common system of power, itself based on class. But there are a number of facets to this argument that need to be spelled out.

First, there is a sense in which Marxism, as it has come down to us, is bigger than either Marx himself or any of his followers. This refers to its irreducible and epoch-making core mentioned above, that is, its emphasis on the analysis and transformation of capitalism. All those who accept this emphasis are operating, whether they like it or not, within the

framework of Marxism. This is a matter of intellectual history, independent of anyone's predilection for labels. What Marxism does not imply is any necessary agreement with Marx or certain Marxists on such particular issues as gender and race. We need to be able to relate all such issues to our more general framework of analysis without being hobbled by the outdated or otherwise faulty attitudes of our predecessors. This is regarded as a perfectly routine expectation within mainstream scientific and political discourse, hardly even worthy of mention. But just as mainstream commentators often view Marxists as uniquely "biased," so they tend to view them as uniquely tarnished by any flaws in their intellectual heritage. "Left" critics of Marxism sometimes apply similar guilt-by-association assumptions.

Secondly, those who accuse Marxism of slighting non-class forms of oppression often convey an unduly narrow view of class. Countless coalitions address themselves to such listings as "workers, women, people of color." But how many stop to consider that the women and the people of color they are addressing are themselves at the same time working people? This is not to say that the race and gender traits shouldn't be mentioned; it is to say that the class designation is broader and more inclusive. If groups oppressed by gender and race are listed *parallel* to workers, one can too easily get the impression that being "working class" entails being white and male. By the same token, the working class is often taken to be much smaller than it really is. If we look at the actual working class—as distinct from a mere shopping-list entry in some catalog of oppressed groups—gender and racial differences come to the forefront as a matter of course, but in a way that also points to a common interest in resolving them. This does not pre-empt the need for mutual support organizations of those oppressed along non-class lines; it merely stresses the conditions under which such distinct organizations will be able to pool their strength to bring the larger changes that their members need.

Third, class differences have a peculiar trait compared to all other social cleavages. Classes are by definition unequal. One can talk about equality between women and men, and one can talk about equality between different ethnic groups, but one cannot talk about equality between the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalist class would not exist if it did not dominate the working class. The only way to bring about equality among the members of different classes is to abolish class as a social category. This is both the simplest and the most difficult barrier to overcome. It is simple in the sense that classes are deliberate human constructs; the class can disappear while the individual members remain. But the barrier is difficult because of all the historical/institutional reinforcements erected by the ruling class. The very concentration of this class—its small size, its homogeneity, its organizational advantage—makes it uniquely resistant to any collective internal transformation. At the same time, its social power has a scope and a degree of coherence—not to mention enforcement mechanisms—that go beyond anything attributable to any non-class entity (e.g., all whites or all men).

Fourth, granting the decisive power exercised by capital, one still has to ask to what extent all those who are outside the capitalist class belong to the category of the most oppressed in class terms, i.e., the working class. The question needs to be raised here, because it is often argued or suggested that the existence of an intermediate class between capitalists and workers proves the importance of having a non-class-based approach to issues of race and gender. I cannot presume to settle here the long-running debate over whether or not professionals, intellectuals, and artists constitute a separate class in capitalist society. But in relation to our present concerns, there are a few points to be made. (1) Especially with regard to race, it is true that significant advances toward equality can be made outside a framework of class struggle; however, the same individuals who may have gained full acceptance within a circumscribed context remain at the mercy of traditional behavior-patterns when they go outside

that context. (2) A large majority of women and an overwhelming majority of people of color neither belong to the capitalist class nor enjoy professional status. (3) The policy changes that would help end oppression based on race or sex—both directly for the majority of its victims and indirectly for those who occupy the intermediate class positions—are consistently opposed by the capitalist class (examples: full employment, comparable worth, subsidized childcare, paid parental leave).

The upshot of all these considerations is that even if one's primary commitment is to respond to a non-class form of oppression, one will not be able to take more than the most preliminary steps toward liberation without engaging in class-oriented politics. The exact constitution of any class-based popular alliance is a complex matter, but the decisive role of capital in shaping existing society cannot be seriously doubted. Marxism's contribution lies in its sustained record of analyzing that role and of trying to build an alternative that will reflect the needs of the majority.

The political practice of Marxists deserves criticism to the degree that they have failed to respond to *any* of the manifestations of oppression. Marxist theory, moreover, needs to be continuously updated through assimilation of the new insights arising from such criticism. But those who attack Marxism as such are not helping this process. They are attacking the one body of thought and experience that has focused upon the core of system-wide oppression. Their impact will tend to perpetuate the fragmentation of the left and thereby to weaken any popular response.

5. The search for a cure

Much of the inclination to reject Marxism is associated with a wish for "new thinking." There is a curious irony in this. What could be newer than a society at peace with others, with itself, and with nature? More immediately, what could be newer than a progressive movement which, instead of just

reacting to each separate problem or crisis, could itself become a coherent social force capable of growth? And what could be more worn out than capitalism's perpetual striving for novelty?

The real issue, of course, is not whether one's thoughts are new. Changes of surroundings and of audiences will assure them some degree of novelty in any case. The proper question to ask is, what will be one's frame of reference. More specifically for us: Do we or do we not take the critique of capitalism as our point of departure? And if not, then what *do* we take?

I noted earlier the common tendency to regard Marxists as uniquely subject to bias or uniquely tainted by the prejudices of their forebears. A similar dynamic comes into play in discussions of the movement's future. Somehow, it seems that if we retain a Marxian framework, we are the victims of hidebound tradition, whereas if we reject it, a world of unlimited possibilities opens up to us.

This is nonsense. In the matters that concern us, the number of options is limited, and each has its own tradition. Moreover, the track record of those who reject the past indiscriminately is by no means encouraging.

For the U.S. left, one of the best-known recent examples of such a *tabula rasa* illusion was in the student movement of the 1960s. The students tried to avoid an authoritarian trap by rejecting structural guidelines almost completely. Far from guaranteeing accountability, this approach left their organization defenseless against manipulation.

The current equivalent approach is that of fleeing class-based analysis in favor of an endless cycle of anti-oppression struggles, in which the power behind the oppression is left unrecognized and unscathed.

Both in the present case and in that of the 1960s, there is an element of justification in the way that people are trying to renovate the movement. The demands of the 1960s for internal democracy and the subsequent calls for struggle against non-class forms of oppression are uniformly vital to healthy left politics. But just as the anti-structural bias back-

fired in the 1960s, so the fear of a class-based analysis and movement is backfiring now. The movement will remain divided and marginalized until this fear can be overcome.

As a partial antidote to the fear of class-thinking on the left, I would suggest a series of practical considerations:

(a) The legislative victories of single-issue organizations are relatively easily reversed.

(b) People struggling on any particular issue need the support of those whose primary personal concern may be with another issue.

(c) The key to defending gains and blocking reversals is to gain at least a share of power over the society as a whole.

(d) Understanding the connections between issues—which is what class analysis is all about—plays an important role in sustaining individual commitment over the long term.

(e) The shared understanding of such connections provides the basis for expanding the struggle, partly by inspiring new people and partly by keeping alive the cumulative experience of their predecessors.

*Give your friends subscriptions to
Monthly Review!*

Use the convenient card bound into this issue. Send \$25 for the first gift sub, \$20 for each additional one, to:
Monthly Review, 122 W. 27 St., New York, NY 10001.

U.S. AND CANADIAN LABOR: CONVERGENCE AT WHOSE EXPENSE?

by MARTIN J. MORAND

Convergence is coming. Things will get worse for labor in Canada until and unless they get better for unions in the United States. Not mainly the Free Trade Agreement, nor the Charter, nor regressive industrial relations laws in Nova Scotia, Alberta, and British Columbia but mostly the mobility of capital will undermine labor's power. The Americanizing of Canadian industrial relations and the downsizing of Canadian unions will not occur without a hell of a fight but it will occur unless or until the United States labor movement succeeds in revitalizing itself, perhaps sooner than it might otherwise, as a result of its recent envious, but still superficial, interest in the accomplishments of its Canadian sisters and brothers.

Canadians have long known that we in the United States knew little and, until recently, cared less about industrial relations in Canada. Many Canadian industrial relations specialists, though they study in and research about the United States, do not fully understand the enormous and widening gap between us. Camouflaged as the phenomena are by an apparently common language and superficially similar (i.e., Wagner-like) labor laws, the facts are that our unions and our labor relations are distancing themselves,

Martin J. Morand is the Director of the Pennsylvania Center for the Study of Labor Relations at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. This article was first presented at the 1990 Annual Conference of the Canadian Industrial Relations Association in Victoria, British Columbia, in June 1990.

each from the other, even as our businesses and trade relations converge toward that total integration which will make it impossible to separate them. My thesis is that such dichotomy between the industrial relations superstructure and the economic foundations of our societies cannot long endure.

It is relatively easy to illustrate these disparities in the area of unionism and labor-management relations. There is excellent research, particularly from a Canadian perspective, on union density and industrial relations legislation and practice. Therefore, I will devote myself mostly the non-collectively bargained rights and conditions of individual workers, with or without unions. I will attempt to show how these individual rights illuminate the depth of our divergence, impact upon the collective rights of workers in unions, and would make any convergence of our industrial relations situations redound to the detriment of Canadian workers.

But, first, some reflections on the industrial relations laws and behaviors in the United States. While there is some debate about the cause/effect relationship between legislation and union power, laws and their administration do matter. Richard Trinclisti, Assistant Director of Organizing for the United Mine Workers of America, *immediately after* the Pittston settlement, asserted, "Strikes are no longer an effective weapon in labor's arsenal. We must find an alternative because the legal deck is stacked against unions."

He was referring primarily to the problem of replacement workers. At Pittston there was a possibility of a settlement because, and only because, the company had a non-union mine to which it could transfer the scabs. In another coal strike, the local management (of a Canadian corporation) frustrated a potential buyout by a union firm by promising the strikebreakers permanent jobs. Thus, the managers created a potentially costly breach of contract suit by the strikebreakers and used the threat of this suit to frustrate the buyout and protect their own jobs—a new form of golden parachute.

By contrast, the 1989 telephone strikes were able to be settled because there were no strikebreakers—supervisors operated the phones. The Eastern Airlines and Greyhound Bus strikes will or will not be settled depending on a resolution of the replacement issue. It should be obvious that it is difficult to settle a strike if the strikers have no jobs to which to return. The permanent replacement phenomenon led James Molatsi, President of the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa, to wonder, “In South Africa, the laws hold that if one goes on strike, he is fired. In the United States, if you strike, they hire permanent replacements. What is the difference?”

Organizing workers and, particularly, negotiating contracts on their behalf, has been, in the United States, mostly without benefit of law. A union which waited for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to get it a contract has *always* waited in vain. Today, as U.S. unionists begin once again to lobby for labor law reform, they do not even seek (because they can’t imagine Congress enacting or courts upholding such a curtailment of the sacred rights of private property) that one legal right most essential to making meaningful the Wagner Act’s purpose—arbitration of first contract negotiation impasses.

The unlikelihood that union ranks will be rebuilt through reliance on the labor law and Board is underlined by examination of the record for 1989. All unions combined sought NLRB certification through elections for about 240,000 workers—this in a private sector workforce of almost 100 million. The less than 50 percent win rate in unit elections was concentrated in smaller firms so that representation rights were won for just over 90,000 workers, and based on past performance, first contracts will be won for fewer than 80 percent of these. Decertification losses in 1989 cost unions almost 15,000 members. As a percent of the growing labor force we are likely, according to Richard Freeman, to face a fall-off to 5 percent union density in the private sector in this decade.

The Canadian concept of the government as promoter of industrial peace is and has been absent in the United States not so much because of our laws as because of our courts. In the United States, to get government to act on behalf of workers and union, we must line up the Congress, the President, and the Courts, which occurs as frequently as a linear conjunction of Mars, Earth, and Venus. The only time this occurred was in the mid-1930s when labor had a politically responsive Congress and President and a passive (or frightened by the threat of packing) Supreme Court.

The legal deck has been and continues to be stacked against unions in terms of both government negativism and administrative ineffectiveness. In Canada, the government not only has the power to pass a law but to implement it promptly and properly. In the United States employers are advised by lawyers to circumvent the law. NLRB cease and desist orders, issued and confirmed after years of litigation, merely order the cessation of illegal acts and then provide a practical blueprint on how to circumvent the law in the future without getting caught. Judicial review, the process by which legislated intent may be distorted and legal enforcement delayed is one of our central concerns.

It is not the case, as popularly presumed, that labor's legal environment became negative only in the Reagan years—or even with the adoption of the Taft-Hartley law in 1947. Major union growth in the 1930s had not been as dependent on a governmental system as it became in Canada in the 1940s. Industrial worker organizing was a cause, more than an effect, of the Wagner Act. Congress reacted to a labor upsurge already occurring in the coal, electrical, textile, and clothing industries. The United Automobile Workers won recognition from General Motors through an illegal sitdown strike. John L. Lewis bargained with U.S. Steel without benefit of a Labor Board election.

Of course, the 1935 law legitimized and assisted union initiatives, but by 1938 in *MacKay Radio* we already had the court sanctioned doctrine of permanent replacements. By

1941 and 1942, the law's prohibition against employer interference, restraint, or coercion was effectively vitiated by the Supreme Court's American Tube and Virginia Electric employer free speech decisions (later incorporated in the 1947 Taft-Hartley laws). In more recent years, judge-made law has exacerbated the problem. In the 1983 *Belknap* case, the Court gave permanent replacements access to breach of contract suits should they be replaced as part of a strike settlement. The 1985 Pattern Makers case destroyed a union's right to discipline a member for scabbing—even if the individual had participated in the organization's decision to strike. The 1989 *TWA v Federation of Flight Attendants* decision, giving superseniority to picket-line crossers, was simply one more nail in the coffin.

Strikes have now become an employer weapon to break unions, and union leaders often holster the strike threat—classically the primary weapon in labor's arsenal—in an effort to preserve the union as an institution. (This is akin to destroying a village in order to save it.)

If the law was of so little assistance, how then can we account for labor's growth and gains in the 1940s, 1950s, and even into the 1960s? Mostly war and Cold War. Even during the First World War, and certainly during the Second World War, the joint pressures for uninterrupted production and social stability, together with the military's absorption of the reserve army of the unemployed, fostered unionism. The post-war boom and the U.S. role in supplying armaments and other manufactured goods to the world sustained that momentum.

That it was the socio-economic-political context more than the NLRB which encouraged union growth in the post-war period was evident by the mid-1960s, particularly in the South. There, where the law should have been a lever for labor, the Board was picketed and some union leaders advocated total repeal of the law. They had found it only a snare and delusion when it came to enforcing worker rights, efficient only when acting against unions. Recently, this "better

off with nothing than with this” attitude has become the posture of some national union leaders.

The brief moment when a Democratic President and Congress responded to the labor upsurge already occurring had one lasting effect. It served to tie the hearts and minds—if not the hands—of the trade union movement to the Democratic Party, even though it has done nothing since then to expand, or even protect, trade unionism. Indeed, the southern Democrats were at the forefront of Taft-Hartley, and the Kennedy brothers, John and Robert, played a major role in setting the stage for the Landrum-Griffin Act. Were it not for public sector bargaining laws in at least some states, the U.S. labor movement today would have millions fewer members and represent only about 10 percent of the workforce.

There is a less studied, but more significant, moral and intellectual gap between the United States and Canada which is illustrated by the way we balance individual and corporate rights. Ironically, much of the conventional wisdom holds that the United States is more individualistic, Canada more collective. Whatever other wisdom that may reflect, it clearly does not hold when we consider how the legal rights of workers as individuals compare with the rights granted by law to that fictitious legal individual, the corporation.

To underline the connections between the different ways individual workers’ rights are treated and their impact on unionism, I offer three examples: health care, unemployment compensation, and statutory holidays and vacations. The health care issue illustrates not only the impact of social rights on labor-management relations, it also shows how big business strives to socialize its costs of operation and succeeds. Unemployment compensation benefits that are low and paid to only a fraction of the unemployed, combined with the absence of family benefits or health protection, contribute to U.S. labor’s weakness in resisting concessions and the ease of recruiting strike breakers. Paid holidays and vacations mandated by law reflect a willingness to place the rights of individual workers ahead of the perquisites of property. The

labor fringes which Canada has woven into a safety net reduce employer incentives to resist or break unions.

Health care is the biggest single source of bargaining conflict in the United States. It was a factor in 78 percent of the major strikes in 1989. The best known examples were in the telephone industry, coal mining, and the health care business itself. The compromises from a “no backward steps” position which these unions were forced to accept have led to distrust and alienation among the members.

Publicly funded health care may become our solitary example of the South converging with the North, but not because we’ve suddenly gotten religion or found our social conscience. Rather, it is now high on the political agenda because employers, particularly in export-oriented industries, have decided to compromise their anti-government principles to save a buck. Unions have been unable to agree on a funding formula for that national health insurance for which they have been campaigning for half a century. Those that have generous, employer-funded health plans are loath to contemplate a tax-based system, particularly because our regressive tax system fuels an anti-tax, anti-social mentality.

But big business knows what it wants. As Jack Sheinkman of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union has noted,

the key issues focus on financing. We start with a very uneven playing field, with costs and benefits distributed almost haphazardly across society. Labor has an increasing concern about government and business dumping costs onto workers . . . given the regressivity of our tax system, workers would bear a . . . disproportionate share of health care costs in a publicly financed system. I’m beginning to see aspects which are reminiscent of a Savings and Loan style bailout, and I don’t like it.

Maintaining the flow of employer financing while moving to a universal public system will be tricky. Big business in the United States has long since learned to socialize the costs of collective bargaining. The first negotiated pension plans called for \$100 per month for retirees, with the com-

panies to make up the difference between Social Security payments and that amount. Soon we saw corporate support for increased Social Security benefits. Since Social Security taxes are essentially regressive and since the corporate contribution in the period was on only the first \$3600 per year of wages, this corporate liberalism was not charity but a money-saving move.

Responding to a suggestion made at a health care conference in February for “huge demonstrations” or a “massive march on Washington,” Sheinkman declined endorsement. He pointed out that “without a *specific* labor plan to present to Congress, a march would not be effective . . . labor had demanded and gotten both the Social Security program and unemployment insurance because it proposed specific ideas rather than a vague ‘program.’”

When the United States passed a federal Unemployment Compensation law, it provided for national uniformity in employer payments and worker benefits. Congress permitted some state autonomy *and* permitted employers in state programs to avoid 90 percent of the federal tax. State legislatures rushed to substitute separate programs at the behest of employers, who wanted and won a smaller tax burden. Shortly thereafter, responding to arguments by big business lobbyists, states competed to cap the taxable wage base, thus shifting the costs of Unemployment Compensation from big to small business, undermining the base for worker benefits, and encouraging regulations restricting eligibility. The result is that most of the unemployed in the United States today receive no benefits and those who receive them get far less than Canadians. Furthermore, there are wide disparities in state benefits and states are politically pitted against each other to cut, not increase, such employment costs.

Canadian Unemployment Compensation pays higher benefits to a higher percentage of the work force for longer periods of time. In Canada over 80 percent of unemployed workers received Unemployment Compensation in 1987, while less than 30 percent of unemployed workers in the

United States received such payments that year. In Canada the benefit is targeted to return 60 percent of wages; in the United States the payout is less than 40 percent of wages. Taken together with programs like health care and family allowances, this makes for a higher and tighter safety net for Canadian workers. This may help explain why unemployment in Canada in the 1980s did not lead to the concessions and strikebreaking which occurred in the United States. As one Greyhound scab explained, "My kid needs an operation. This way I can afford it."

Even with recent cuts in Canadian federal unemployment benefits, the Canadian unemployed worker is still far better protected than her U.S. counterpart. There are already U.S. demands under the Free Trade Agreement to further limit Canadian benefits—pressures which will continue, at least until U.S. benefits are improved. That Canadian Unemployment compensation cuts are not a response to U.S. complaints but a reflection of Reagan-Thatcher-Mulroney faith in freedom to fail may be politically more palatable, but still leaves the unemployed with less on their plate.

When industrial unions won Supplementary Unemployment Benefits requiring employers to make up the difference between unemployment benefits and a negotiated figure of 80 to 90 percent of wages, legislatures in industrial states were confronted (and sometimes confused) by corporate endorsement of labor's historic goal of higher benefits. In this instance, not only did heavy industry save benefit dollars by supporting a liberalization of the maximum benefits, they neatly avoided paying their share of the increased cost to the system by keeping the cap on taxable wages low. One consequence of this is that while a Pennsylvania garment worker's unemployment benefit might be only \$82 per week and a steelworker's benefit \$280, both of their employers are paying to the fund on the same maximum taxable wage—\$8,000.

These figures are for my state of Pennsylvania. Each state has almost total autonomy in our supposedly federal Unemployment Compensation system which, as with Worker's

Compensation and other labor standards legislation, encourages interstate raiding of businesses and a great deal of state legislative political corruption. This illustrates a peculiar and fascinating political difference between the United States and Canada. In Canada, if one province takes an initiative (as Saskatchewan did with health care), other provinces are likely to look upon it, see it as good, and emulate it. In the United States, states spend billions buying businesses from each other in the name of economic development, and arguments against social insurance or other business costs are based on another state's seductive offer, "We can do it for you cheaper."

Most Canadian industrial relations specialists are probably aware that only slightly more than one-fourth of U.S. unemployed workers are receiving benefits. However, most are probably unaware that in 49 states it is not illegal for an employer to fire a worker for signing up for unemployment benefits. Such sanctioned anti-social behavior may seem surprising; the reason for an employer taking such action might seem puzzling. Why refuse to recall a worker from layoff for merely taking advantage of a legislated social benefit? There is a method in this seeming madness. It is rooted in the experience rating system. Every worker who collects benefits impacts the employer's cost. It pays to deprive workers of benefits when dismissing them and to discourage workers from applying for benefits during weeks of temporary unemployment, so much so that a whole industry has grown up in the States that advises employers on how to prevent their employees from collecting. In cases where employees are permanently separated, the employer is advised by management consultants to assert that the cause of separation was some sin on the part of the worker, such as excessive absenteeism. It matters not whether there is an iota of truth to the claim. The mere assertion will lead to a rejection of the worker's claim. Of course, the worker may appeal. But many fail to do so within the time limits. Of those who appeal, those not represented (by an attorney or by non-legal counsel, such as a union official) have limited success.

The atmosphere in the office where the unemployed worker goes for succor is not user-friendly. The system is 100 percent employer financed. When the labor movement in Pennsylvania proposed worker contributions, business was appalled. It's their agency, they know it, and they are willing to pay the price to keep it—and a reserve army of uncompensated unemployment—that way. The scandal of the uncompensated unemployed has become so great that the United Business Association joined the AFL-CIO in sponsoring a study of the causes of lack of coverage.

It is an interesting commentary on the state of labor market research in the United States that while the literature is replete with studies of Unemployment Compensation abuse—ineligible workers collecting—investigation of the denial of Unemployment Compensation rights to eligible workers is a rarity. Employers knew, when they lobbied for a states-rights system in the 1930s, that a national system would be less susceptible to political manipulation. If the taxable wage base for Unemployment Compensation were to match the Social Security taxable salary maximum, we would still have a regressive tax, but not one so distorted in favor of bigger businesses.

That in the United States statutory holidays are not necessarily paid holidays came as a shock to one of the most sophisticated professors of labor law in Canada. (That Canada's most politically conservative province created a holiday last February just so workers and their families could enjoy a day together came as a shock to me.) The impact on labor relations and union solidarity became particularly pernicious when Martin Luther King's birthday was designated a legal holiday. Employers responded to union proposals to make it a paid holiday with racially divisive suggestions that unions ask their members whether they wanted to trade it for another holiday such as Columbus Day. (I would argue that the racism fostered by nearly a century of Constitutionally endorsed slavery followed by a century of legally enforced segregation is the biggest single explanation for American

Exceptionalism—the absence of class conscious cohesiveness among U.S. workers and unions.)

As for mandated paid vacations and other forms of paid leave (and even unpaid parental leave) we simply live in two different worlds. Not only don't we in the United States legislate such freedom from the workplace, it's damn difficult to negotiate. The effect of the absence of statutory labor standards clearly increases the incentive for U.S. employers to avoid or decertify unions. It promotes the phenomenon and threat effect of the runaway shop, a major deterrent to unionization.

The facts and arguments elicited to highlight the differences between our industrial relations and employment standards might seem to make a case for "divergent trends" rather than convergence theory. Would Canada, which adapted our Wagner Act so as to give it substance and teeth, follow the United States in undermining it?

The answer is written on the winds of global change reflected in the title "The Stateless Corporation" found on the cover of *Business Week* for May 14, 1990. It is not just in the Communist bloc that socialism in one country is seen to have failed. Sweden, the world's most successful social democracy, is struggling to sustain the employment rights and social benefits it has succeeded in establishing as a standard for the world. In order to save the jobs of 30,000 workers it had to permit one of its major manufacturers to merge and move its headquarters to Switzerland, effectively losing control of the corporation's future growth and development. The mobility of capital has always been a challenge to labor. The founder of our National Labor Union, William Sylvis, saw the significance of the mobility of our manufactured products when he came to Canada to organize for the Molders Union.

Canada provides examples of the minimal reforms needed in the United States; card check certification, speedy elections, rapid remedying of illegal labor practices, mandatory union security, restrictions on hiring strikebreakers and permanent replacements, and first contract arbitration.

Short-term prospects for essential labor law reforms are bleak; the legislative solution requires a political strategy. The tinkering changes labor proposed in the late 1970s were too little then and would be too late now.

Canadian labor was willing to work at building a fundamentally different political movement, even at the cost of losing a particular election. Faced with a choice between “wasting” a vote on a candidate who could not win and “wasting” it on one whose winning would not help unions, they did not blink.

The process of winning control of, or even influence on, the government is far more complex and infinitely more difficult in the United States. The third party route is effectively banned. The influence of money on politics is so pervasive that one of our leading Wall Street bankers, Felix Rohatyn, recognizes that we have a one-party system in the United States:

The Republican Party is internationalist and expansionary militarily and economically; it is rigorously conservative, if not reactionary . . . the Democrats are not an opposition party . . . [they] share power, they do not seek it . . . they are part of an existing power structure, almost a coalition government with a Republican administration.”
(*Wall Street Journal*)

A necessary, though hardly sufficient, cure for the apathy, ignorance, and political cynicism of U.S. unionists may require their belief that their participation matters. The only participants who appear to matter in U.S. politics today are campaign contributors.

The growth of multi-party systems in Eastern Europe may be infectious. The lessons I would hope we’d learn from Canadian labor and from Vaclav Havel are that ideas count. And, so, I conclude with a bow to a Canadian scholar who writes of “Divergent Trends” rather than “Convergence.”

It has been dogma in the United States that unions had to adopt [a] pragmatic, non-ideological approach . . . that dogma is now being challenged. Some commentators are arguing that the thoroughness with which the unions expelled leftists during the McCarthy era of

the 1950s has left the movement bereft of idealism and passions. They hold that, for the movement to survive and prosper in the future, it must find a new social purpose and must convince American society that it stands for more than maximizing the economic interests of its members. Whether such a move is necessary or indeed possible is likely to remain controversial. On the other hand, it is difficult to foresee anything but a continuing decline in collective bargaining in the United States unless some very substantial changes are made. (Roy J. Adams, "North American Industrial Relations: Divergent Trends in Canada and the United States," *International Labor Review*, Vol. 128, No. 1 [1989])

Subscribe to

Monthly Review

- ☐ 1 year \$25 (foreign \$29)
- ☐ 2 years \$41 (foreign \$50)
- ☐ Libraries and Institutions \$45 (foreign \$48)
- ☐ Students and Senior Citizens \$20 (foreign \$22)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Canadian subscribers please pay the foreign rate

Monthly Review, 122 West 27 St., New York, NY 10001

THE BRITISH INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM, 1945-1946

by JOHN NEWSINGER

The Vietnam wars did not begin with the French return to Vietnam at the end of the Second World War, but with the British intervention that preceded it. The story of this intervention ought to be more widely known.

The French Collapse

After the fall of France in the summer of 1940, the French administration in Indochina pledged its loyalty to the pro-Axis Vichy regime. This did not, however, save it from increasing pressure from the Japanese, who were determined to bring the colony under their control. To this end, the Japanese initiated serious border clashes in September 1940 and threatened to bomb Hanoi. This threat brought about a speedy French capitulation to their demands. The French accepted the establishment of Japanese military bases throughout Indochina. In return, they were left to rule over their Vietnamese subjects much as before.

The French humiliation at Japanese hands emboldened the Vietnamese nationalists. At the end of September, the first of a series of Communist-led insurrections broke out, and was ruthlessly suppressed by the French, with over 8,000 killed. According to Joseph Buttinger:

John Newsinger teaches at Wreake Valley College in Leicestershire, England. He is currently working on a book about British counterinsurgency.

Airplanes and artillery razed entire villages and small towns...In view of the desperate mood of the French, it is surprising that any prisoners were taken. But the treatment meted out to some was atrocious. They were brought to Saigon by night on river boats, and they could be seen standing in long rows in the harbour under glaring searchlights, strung together by wires pushed through the palms of their hands.¹

For the Allies at war with Japan, the situation in Indochina posed considerable difficulty. As far as the British were concerned, the objective was to drive out the Japanese and return Vietnam to the Free French under General Charles de Gaulle as part of a colonial restoration throughout Southeast Asia. The American attitude, however, was different.

Astonishing as it might seem in view of later developments, the United States was at that time hostile to colonial restoration in general, and to the reassertion of French colonial rule over Indochina in particular. President Franklin Roosevelt had on numerous occasions made clear his lack of sympathy for the French and their empire. "Indochina should not go back to France," he had told Secretary of State Cordell Hull in mid-October 1944. "France has had the country—thirty million inhabitants—for nearly one hundred years, and the people are worse off than they were at the beginning."² Instead, Roosevelt proposed the replacement of French rule by some sort of trusteeship that would prepare the way for independence. These sentiments had repercussions in the theater of war, where Americans not only refused to cooperate with the French, but actually provided assistance through the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to the Communist-led Vietminh.

In March 1945 the Japanese responded to their rapidly deteriorating military position elsewhere by staging a coup d'état in Indochina, finally eliminating what remained of French power there. On March 11 Japan proclaimed Vietnam independent of France and set up a puppet government under the Emperor Bao Dai.

Most French army units were taken by surprise by the coup and were quickly disarmed and imprisoned. But some offered resistance and tried to fight their way to China. They appealed to the Allies for assistance. The British were eager to help, but the Americans, although much better placed, refused. This situation brought to a head a continuing jurisdictional conflict between the British and U.S. military commands in the area.³ Both the British and the French were outraged by the American attitude, and some still are. One eminent British historian has argued that Roosevelt's refusal to help the French at that time "can only be compared with that of the Russians toward the Warsaw rising the year before." In his dying days, according to this account, Roosevelt had brought "dishonour . . . on America."⁴

The Communists Emerge

The Japanese takeover in March 1945 created a power vacuum in much of Vietnam. Japanese military strength was concentrated in Saigon and elsewhere in the south of the country. They had eliminated French authority in the north but took no effective steps to replace it with their own. The communists, led by Ho Chi Minh, began to move in from southeast China to fill this vacuum, gradually establishing themselves as the dominant political force throughout much of the north.

As early as mid-April the communists had set up a Provisional Revolutionary Government and a National Liberation Army with the clear intention of taking power once the Japanese had been defeated. By the summer of 1945 Vietminh forces had liberated six northern provinces and parts of four others. They established their own local administrations and began building up their military strength, expecting that Japanese defeat was certain, but that there would still be much fighting.

The communists were prepared for a period of continuing struggle against the Japanese that was likely to grow more

intense as their influence spread south. The dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the sudden Japanese capitulation dramatically changed the situation.

The Japanese collapse offered enormous opportunities to the communists, who were ready to seize them. Vietminh forces moved swiftly to consolidate their hold over the north and on August 19 their first units arrived in Hanoi. They were given a tumultuous reception with over 100,000 people demonstrating in the streets. With Hanoi in his hands, on September 2 Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and read out to a crowd of over half a million people the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence. He began by citing the declaration of 1776:

All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Ho then went on:

The whole Vietnamese people, animated by a common purpose, are determined to fight to the bitter end against any attempt by the French colonialists to reconquer their country.

We are convinced that the Allied nations which at Tehran and San Francisco have acknowledged the principles of self-determination and equality of nations, will not refuse to acknowledge the independence of Vietnam.

A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against the Fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent.⁵

American OSS officers were photographed alongside General Vo Nguyen Giap saluting the Republican flag. At that time, the communists seem to have believed that if they could establish a republican government then it would be recognized by the Allies and the French would have no choice but to come to terms with them.

While the communists were able to consolidate their hold over the north and to establish a stable government with

broad support in Hanoi, further south their influence was not as strong. In Saigon, for example, there were a number of nationalist and socialist organizations competing for power and influence. Indeed, the communists there were criticized for putting their faith in negotiations with the Allies and for the policy of studied moderation which they hoped would make their regime acceptable to the West.

On August 21 the United National Front organized a large militant demonstration in Saigon, bringing together the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and the city's strong Trotskyist movement. This was a show of strength by those critical of communist policy and gave an early indication that here the Vietminh would not have it all their way. On August 25 the Vietminh organized their own, larger, demonstration, and that same day established the Committee of the South as a revolutionary government. The Committee, headed by communist leader Tran Van Giau, attempted to establish control over Saigon and to extend its influence throughout the rest of the south. For the time being the communist argument that success could be achieved without confrontation with the Allies carried the day, but there were many who were not convinced.

On September 2 another massive demonstration through Saigon saw a shooting incident in which five Frenchmen and a number of Vietnamese were killed. Several French suspects were arrested but later released at the insistence of the Committee of the South. The communists were determined to avoid anything that might turn the Allies against them. Far from preparing to fight the British troops who were on their way to occupy Saigon, they hoped to be able to work alongside them.

The British Arrive

The British South East Asia Command had been assigned responsibility for the southern half of Vietnam at the Potsdam Conference of July 1945; the Chinese Nationalist

forces were given responsibility for the north. Troops under the overall command of the liberal Lord Louis Mountbatten, and responsible to a Labour Government in London, would restore French rule by force of arms in Saigon, while the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek in effect recognized Ho Chi Minh's government in Hanoi.

The task of occupying Saigon was given to the 20th Indian Division under the command of Major General Douglas Gracey. Officially, he was instructed to avoid involvement in local politics and to limit himself to disarming Japanese troops in the south and relieving the plight of prisoners of war and refugees. In practice he was to behave quite differently.

The 20th Indian Division was 22,000 men strong and overwhelmingly Indian in composition. It was supported by an armored regiment and two Royal Air Force squadrons. The Division was an experienced, battle-hardened formation that had fought long and hard against the Japanese in Burma.

The British soldiers arrived in Saigon on September 6 and thereafter troop-strength was built up over a period of weeks. The full Division was not in place until the end of October. Gracey and his staff arrived to take control on September 13. He was immediately approached by the Committee of the South, but he refused to have any dealings with them. Gracey was interested only in dealing with the Japanese military authorities and the French.

The communists' determination to work with the British was such that they purged some nationalists who called for armed struggle, particularly Trotskyists, many of whom were arrested and killed. The British refusal to recognize the existence of the Committee of the South completely undermined its conciliatory position, forced the communists into confrontation, and strengthened the position of those who advocated armed resistance.

On September 17 the Committee attempted to compel Gracey to recognize them by imposing a boycott of the French, calling a series of strikes and ordering the closing of the

Saigon market, cutting off food supplies to the city. Rather than negotiating with the Committee, Gracey decided to crush it. On September 19 he closed down the Vietnamese press and took control of Saigon Radio. This was followed by more drastic measures that amounted to martial law: all demonstrations and meetings were banned, carrying weapons was prohibited, the death penalty was introduced for a range of public order offenses, and the oppressive Japanese curfew regulations were reimposed.

Gracey proceeded to arm the French prisoners of war so they could reinforce the small French military presence in the city. The French Commissioner, Colonel Cedile, could muster some 1,500 armed men. According to one account, Gracey ordered Cedile to overthrow the Committee of the South.⁶

In the early hours of September 23 the French staged a coup d'état, seizing public buildings, arresting large numbers of Vietnamese (the Committee escaped them), and raising the *tricolour* over Saigon's City Hall. The takeover was accompanied by celebrations that degenerated into a small scale pogrom, with Vietnamese civilians being insulted, man-handled, and beaten on the streets and in their homes. This French coup was the culmination of Gracey's martial law crackdown. As General Leclerc gratefully informed Mountbatten: "Your General Gracey has saved French Indochina."⁷

War

The Committee of the South responded by calling a general strike and the first fighting broke out. According to one account

The days immediately after the coup saw much sporadic fighting in which the British-Indian troops fought off desperate nationalist attacks, all over the city. In the early stages the Vietnamese casualties were fairly heavy. In one clash with 80 Indian Infantry Brigade on 26 September in the south of the city, sixty Vietnamese were killed. Mortars, 25 pounders and heavy machine-guns were freely used by

the British in the street fighting, and non-combatant Vietnamese must certainly have suffered . . .

It was in the midst of this confused battle that the OSS Commander in Saigon, Colonel Dewey, was killed by the Vietminh. He was almost certainly mistaken for a French officer. The irony was that at the time the OSS was hostile to British policy and openly sympathetic to the Vietnamese.⁹ This was demonstrated quite brutally by an incident that took place in Laos the day after Dewey was killed: an OSS officer refused to intervene when Vietminh troops arrested a French officer and executed him; he declared that he was neutral. A British officer, Peter Kemp, tried to interfere, and even attempted to shield the Frenchman with his body, but without success.¹⁰ Mountbatten protested to the Americans, who in the words of one critic "were on the other side" in this war.

While the British tried to clear Saigon, the Vietminh continued infiltrating men and established roadblocks that effectively isolated the city from the rest of the country. Even though they were poorly armed, the Vietminh were able to put the British under considerable pressure. The British at last agreed to open negotiations. A ceasefire was agreed to, starting on October 2, and discussion began. These negotiations were just a ploy as far as the British were concerned, a device to gain time to provide a breathing space while more troops were flown in. On October 9 the British gave the Vietminh an ultimatum, ordering them to surrender the city or face the consequences. Heavy fighting broke out the next day.

The Vietminh made fierce attacks on British positions throughout the city, but were beaten off. On October 12 they attempted to overrun the airfield at Tan Son Nhut. They reached "the doors of the radio station and were within 300 yards of the control tower when they were stopped; the fight for the airfield turned into a grim struggle as its loss would have cut Saigon off from the rest of the world."¹² The Vietminh attacks were repulsed with heavy casualties.

After the failure of the offensive, the Vietminh resorted to guerrilla tactics and the "bitter street battles . . . gave way to

the brutal business of ambushes, small-scale guerrilla attacks, terrorism and repressive counter-measures, all carried out in the midst of a sullen and resentful population. No matter how many nationalists the British killed or captured, more appeared the next day."¹³ By the middle of November the British believed that they had broken the blockade of the city and were mopping up what was left of a defeated enemy.

The official history of the 2nd King Edward VII's Gurkha Rifles provides an interesting firsthand account of this guerrilla warfare:

Day and night there was usually trouble somewhere. Up to the end of our bridge posts were sniped regularly. Patrols were continuously searching the countryside for rebels and houses for arms The country was ideal for the guerrilla tactics which were used against us. Everywhere the ground was heavy and swampy, criss-crossed with drainage and irrigation canals. In such country the Annamites always had first shot. It was annoying that they never stayed to bear the brunt of the attack but always faded into the countryside where it was almost impossible to follow them without sustaining casualties It was curious to find ourselves operating with the Japs. At the beginning, owing to shortage of man-power we had to use them a lot On many occasions we acted as the guns while the Japs played the role of bearers.¹⁴

This use of large numbers of Japanese troops against the Vietminh outraged many British troops and caused an outcry in Britain. Gracey found it necessary, however, both to supplement his inadequate forces and to minimize British casualties. Quite often when particularly fierce Vietminh opposition was met, Japanese troops were sent to deal with it.

By the end of December the British were ready to begin handing the south over to the French, and the first troop withdrawals began. When Gracey himself finally left on January 28, 1946, there were only two British battalions still fighting the Vietminh. These were finally evacuated in March, leaving only a small number of specialist troops behind to assist the French. The last British troops to die in Vietnam were six soldiers killed in an ambush in June 1946.

British military operations against the Vietminh were conducted ruthlessly. This was not a “hearts and minds” operation but the conquest by force of arms of a hostile enemy city. The Operation Instruction issued to the 20th Division makes this quite clear. Officers were warned that

we may find it difficult to distinguish friend from foe. Same vigilance against ambushes and doubtful friends as one observed in the North-West Frontier of India Always use the maximum force available to ensure wiping out any hostiles we may meet. If one uses too much no harm is done . . . ¹⁵

The disproportion between casualties inflicted and suffered shows that his advice was taken quite literally: by the middle of January 1946 the British had suffered 40 men killed and 110 wounded and they claimed to have killed some 600 Vietminh. Japanese troops acting under British orders killed many more.

The actions of the British forces caused Mountbatten some worry. He was horrified to learn that they were burning down people’s houses in reprisal for guerrilla attacks and complained about it to Gracey: “Cannot you give such unsavoury jobs (if they are really military necessities) to the French?” he asked. Gracey made clear in his reply that he considered the French much too undisciplined and trigger-happy to be relied on.¹⁶ These were the people to whom he was handing over the country.

Responsibility

Without Gracey and his troops there is no doubt that the French would have found it considerably more difficult, perhaps even impossible, to reestablish themselves in Vietnam. From this point of view it was the British who started the Vietnam war and made it possible for the French to continue it, with American help, until their defeat in 1954. A recent account that positively eulogizes Gracey’s contribution to the struggle against international communism has even argued that the state of South Vietnam that was established after 1954

must be seen as part of this British legacy.¹⁷ The responsibility for this lies not with Gracey, however, but with his political masters, the Labour government in London. The British intervention in Vietnam stands alongside their similar interventions in Greece and Indonesia at the same time. It was part of a struggle to preserve European colonialism and one of the first blows in the Cold War.

NOTES

1. Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 244.
2. Lloyd C. Gardner, *Approaching Vietnam* (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 25.
3. For a recent account of this affair, see Peter M. Dunn, *The First Vietnam War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), pp. 87, 94-105. This book by a former U.S. Air Force Colonel is a strong defense of the British intervention and a ferocious critique of U.S. policy at the time.
4. D. Cameron Watt, *Succeeding John Bull* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 239.
5. Marvin E. Gettleman, ed., *Vietnam* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1965), pp. 65-66.
6. Dennis J. Duncanson, "General Gracey and the Vietminh," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* Vol. 55, No. 3 (October 1968), p. 296.
7. Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (New York: Knopf, 1985), p. 331.
8. George Rosie, *The British in Vietnam* (London: Panther Books, 1970), p. 70.
9. For an insider's account of the OSS in Vietnam see Archimedes Patti, *Why Vietnam?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
10. Peter Kemp, *Alms for Oblivion* (London, 1971), pp. 48-52.
11. Dunn, *First Vietnam War*, p. 206.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
13. Rosie, *British in Vietnam*, p. 75.
14. G. R. Stevens, *History of the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles 1921-1948* (Aldershot, 1952), pp. 278-279.
15. Rajendra Singh, *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War: Post-War Occupation Forces* (1958), p. 199.
16. Peter Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), p. 173.
17. Dunn, *First Vietnam War*, p. 367.

A LITTLE HIROSHIMA IN PANAMA: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. GUILLERMO COHEN-DEGOVIA

The classic writings and artworks depicting the horrors of war normally address themselves either to death and destruction on the battlefield or to the physical and psychological effects on the direct combatants. It is the same with public monuments, and with such public reminders as the signs that used to appear in the Paris Metro, indicating that certain seats were reserved “*pour les mutilés de la guerre*.” But total war, particularly aerial bombardment and invasion, devastates and traumatizes an entire population, children perhaps even more than adults. In this interview, a Panamanian psychotherapist addresses the emotional impact of the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama on ordinary Panamanian citizens, including children. The interview was conducted by a reporter from the Panamanian magazine *Este País*, and originally appeared in that publication. The interviewer’s words are indicated by “EP,” Dr. Cohen-DeGovia’s by “CD.”—The Editors

CD: A trauma is a strong external stimulus that happens in a short period of time and has severe consequences for the normal operation of the individual or social organization.

Remember that the U.S. media joyfully called the treacherous attack “Little Hiroshima.” At the beginning we experienced no feelings but surprise, incredulity, and denial, but as the bombs continued to fall we began to recognize what was happening. There followed various automatic and instinctive responses: to protect oneself, to save loved ones, to be on guard. The bombs continued to fall, now mixed with the sounds of low-flying planes, helicopters, cannons, machine-guns, and rifles. We also recognized that our own troops were responding. This evoked courage, almost joy. “We are resist-

ing!" The gringo, however, shot more and more, and our troops shot less and less. We were angry, impotent. Our anguish over the fate of our loved ones grew. We were frightened. Then we began to get news. The gringos are here, everywhere. There is vandalism, plunder. Our fighters have barricaded themselves against . . . Our fighters?! . . . Confusion. Then despair. Then the awful truth that some Panamanians had welcomed the invaders joyfully. To suspect that one has been betrayed is painful, but not so painful as to know that one has been betrayed. Finally, we were swamped by post-traumatic depression.

Thus was Panama recolonized by violence, by the destruction of life and property, indigenous social forms, the system of social justice. The clothes and language that we encountered on the streets were changed, the national symbols were drained of sovereign meaning. We must fight to regain our national consciousness, which we can regain by fighting for our national liberation.

EP: Dr. Cohen-DeGovia, two quite different responses appeared in the course of the invasion. Some groups worked with and applauded the invaders, calling them "liberators," and defended their property instead of their homeland. Others were devastated by the war of December 20. The patients that you are treating now come from this latter group. Can the psychotherapeutic methods that you are using help them to separate completely their individual traumas from the collective trauma?

CD: One mustn't do this. Some therapists practice a psychology of adaptation, of alienation, of enslavement, of colonialization which takes this very approach. And the control of psychoses by means of "neutral" psychochemicals is another form of this psychic separation. It is absurd to attach the label "therapeutic" to such iatrogenic practices, in which the so-called doctor induces in the patient a new alienation that is just a post-traumatic form of the invasion itself.

But I must also question myself. Am I not, as a therapist, also a victim of the invasion and occupation? And if I recognize myself as a victim, isn't it a sign of "maturity" and health to confront the aggressor? The answer is a clear yes to both questions. This answer came to me from observing relatives of the dead defenders. While looking for their loved ones, many wives, mothers, and fathers converged on the same morgues. They were told that their dead were or might be in some unidentified common grave. United by their shared pain, they organized themselves to exhume their dead relatives, forming the AFC20 [Association for the Relatives of Those Dead on December 20, 1989]. After overcoming countless and despicable bureaucratic obstacles, they managed to open one grave with 123 bodies. They thereby showed the world how barbaric the U.S. empire is and how abject are its Panamanian collaborators. Some of the mourners recovered parts of their lost love objects. Some could not go beyond that level of response. With the ritual funeral practices characteristic of their culture, they would have ended this chapter of their lives. However, the Catholic Church, through Archbishop McGrath, had anathemized all those fallen on December 20 (and thus betrayed his feelings of guilt about openly favoring the invasion). He did so on the very day commemorating the martyrs who had fallen in the invasion, and further anathematized those still falling in skirmishes with the occupying invader. On this patriotic date the Church trampled the martyrs and blessed the invaders with the name of liberators! The mourners were insulted for loving an "evil object." This infamy awoke many of the mourners, since the lie was so grotesque. In the group therapy sessions, the expressions changed from, "If I had known it was an invasion, I would not have let him go," to "If I had known it was an invasion, I would have gone with him." This reaction produces a mature form of depression that leads to constructive actions, the ability to suffer for the self, and to form a bond with others near and far. Indeed, six months after the invasion, the AFC20 linked itself with the Committee for the Rescue of National

Sovereignty and headed a large march in solidarity with the inhabitants of the devastated neighborhood, "El Chorillo." The president of AFC20, Isabel Corro, headed the march with the flag of the presidential period, in which relations with the United States were broken after the January 1964 massacre.

When the Panamanians link their suffering with that of their country, their particular grief with the grief of the other Panamanians, they reach an understanding of it. It is not possible to separate the individual trauma from the collective trauma in effective psychotherapy.

EP: The kind of trauma that you are treating is a complex one. Some psychotherapists think there is a tension between the levels of compromise that must be established between patient and society on the one hand, and the required objectivity and neutrality of science on the other. What can you tell us about this?

CD: My position is clear: I am a combative psychologist and psychotherapist. My country, the functional externality of my personality, is under military assault. There is only one healthy response: to fight. There is only one scientific response, and it is the same. Neutrality is a defence mechanism, a symptom of being colonized without admitting it. It is a familiar trick of neurosis.

EP: According to reports coming from a group at the School of Psychology of Buenos Aires University who were studying the psychotherapy of minors, a group of therapists concluded that children felt guilt over the disappearance of their parents during the military dictatorship because of their incestuous fantasies about their mothers. What do you think of this in the context of Panama?

CD: Anyone who is satisfied with such mental masturbation shows only his or her own colonization. With respect to the children, I have collected dozens of drawings of which the enormous majority depict exactly what they saw and lived. The "Rambo's" in big and small jet planes, hundreds of armed

helicopters, caterpillar tanks, and thousands of soldiers, popularly called “trapedores” (mops) because they have threads of fabric in their hair. All of the children depict them bombing their homes and relatives. And these children are on average seven years old. The age of the Oedipal complex, isn’t it? One of the pictures by a three year old boy named Anthony, extremely dramatic, shows two human figures that were later crossed out in black: “Daddy and his friend are dead.” Then a picture of what he said was a helicopter in which the soldiers who killed his father were hiding. It seems to me that such clarity of the narrative is not favorable to the Buenos Aires interpretation, but, of course, Buenos Aires has not been invaded by the Yanquis. By the way, there is only one drawing showing parents who are openly colonized; it shows some plunder.

EP: How should or could the therapy and resocialization of the patients be structured? When will they be healed?

CD: Their psychological restoration requires that the mourners appropriate the meaning of the death of their loved ones. The soldiers and civilians did not die for any reason other than the U.S. invasion. Thus the meaning of their deaths lies in the assaulted and dishonored homeland. They feel pain and grief for the other fallen Panamanians, too, and for their relatives as Panamanians, not solely as spouses, sons, and daughters. In effect, they feel grief for Panama.

Their resocialization, as you put it in such an orthodox way, will occur only as the patients are able to objectify themselves patriotically in situations other than psychotherapy. They will be healed when they can make restitution for the lost homeland.

SOCIALISM IN THE 1990s: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by OLIVER S. LOUD

Some will recognize in my title the focus of the closing plenary session of the International Conference on the Future of Socialism, held in New York last October under the sponsorship of *Monthly Review* and the New York Marxist School. Seven hundred participants and thirty-eight panelists from twenty countries gathered for forty-eight hours, to adjourn from that last session sobered but undismayed. There was general agreement that Marxist analysis—uncompromisingly critical in the sense that it “fears neither its own conclusions nor conflict with whatever powers there be”—best enables us to understand the world in order to change it.

With that critical orientation, we acknowledged “socialist realities” and were reminded of “socialist aspirations.” We identified the “new social forces in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,” “what had collapsed so dramatically in Eastern Europe,” and the “implications of these changes for Third World countries.” Perhaps the most sobering of discussions was our consideration of the question, “What kind of socialism is possible in a capitalist world?”—a world no longer divided as it has been since 1917 between those countries within, and those attempting to be free from, the world capitalist market.

True to the political-activist tradition, there were proposals for “building mass movements,” for redefining the

Oliver S. Loud is a long-time friend of *Monthly Review* and professor of physical sciences at Antioch University.

“working class,” and for “strategies toward a democratic socialism.” The manifestations of “nationalism, populism, and xenophobia” were assessed, as was the role of “markets” in mixed, even in socialist, economies.

All this—and then the final session: “Where do we go from here?”

The post-war contest of the two super-powers has, by one criterion, run its fateful course. As a participant in the war-time Manhattan Project, for a while I followed with close interest the American-Soviet negotiations for the international control of nuclear energy. As early as 1961, in an address by the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* to the annual conference of college teachers and administrators, I recognized my own conclusion: “Any sophisticated observer knows that the American negotiators have never wanted, have repeatedly deflected agreement.” There are many ways of destabilizing a target regime. When that regime commands natural and cultural resources at all comparable to one’s own, an ever-escalating armaments race is chosen, to push the rival economy to the breaking point. This, of course, is the hidden rationale for the latest and otherwise ridiculous “star wars” project.

The Cold-War strategists who currently congratulate themselves on this victory have yet to admit or assess the costs. Just one of these costs is that the American economy is in its own shambles. Another is the accentuation of poverty everywhere in the world. And still another, the ravaged environment. These by no means exhaust the costs of the unnecessary Cold War. Nor does this “triumph” of capitalism resolve any of the inherent contradictions to which Marxists have long pointed.

We live in a world dominated by the transactions among national elites. By an elite I mean the beneficiaries of *any* system who enjoy illegitimate privileges and prerogatives and who, unless cynical, identify their class interests with those of the nation, even of all humankind. Within those nations presently in new turmoil, yesterday’s elites and those now with elitist aspirations see in the capitalist road prospects for

greater freedom and material comforts than they have yet known—while working people may be overwhelmed by their struggle for survival.

Perhaps the reformers look to the example of Western nations other than the United States—with its periodically battered First Amendment and its stingy social security system. But the immediate prospect for an East European nation is third world impoverishment rather than comfort and freedom for its working people. The West European nations may for a while be able to afford “welfare capitalist” systems; the East European nations will become wards of the International Monetary Fund, with their recently accomplished social security systems dismantled. Class struggles, then, will predictably escalate, and will reveal to what extent the Stalinist disempowerment of the working class will delay its effective political assertion.

From its systemic contradictions, Marxists trace their two principal indictments of the capitalist system: the impoverishment of the increasing majority of humans and the relentless destruction of the biosphere. Marx brilliantly explained and predicted the first of these. If he had come of age early in this century, he would have recognized and explained the growing threat to the environment and so to the human adventure: a compulsively expansionist economy without any provision for braking except a depression will in time press upon the limits of a finite world. Marx would have elucidated the crucial *interaction* of poverty with environmental injury—each at once the cause and the consequence of the other.

And he would have designed, at least in general terms, the only solution: engaging the masses in social-economic planning for development that can continue indefinitely into the human future without generating such constraints as resource depletion, environmental injury, burgeoning human populations, or repression. One way to account for the parallel failures of the capitalist and self-styled socialist systems is to point out what has never yet been achieved anywhere: the integration of political with economic

democracy, of centralized with decentralized social-economic planning, of representative with participatory democratic structures and processes. These are the integrations that humans need to achieve in the decades immediately ahead if we are to secure rather than lose forever the human future. These integrations constitute the requisite mastery of social change and conservation. Has this mastery not been, since 1848, the emancipatory socialist project?

By mid-twentieth century, two points of no return were becoming visible. The human future could be forever lost in a matter of hours by an exchange of nuclear warheads between the superpowers or in a matter of decades by destruction of the natural environment.

The needed processes of social change and conservation must provide for the translation of general strategies, centrally designed, into the particular solutions to the problems of each locality, enlisting the wisdom and the creativity of citizens in face-to-face associations. They must provide for the prompt correction of any unintended and unacceptable consequences, general or local, of public policies. The technologies of communication and of data-processing are already sufficient and improving. The political mobilization remains the challenge.

Not all the massive, urgent world problems have to be solved by the mid-twenty-first century. But the presently deteriorating trends must be reversed by then and the ascent into the good future must be convincingly begun.

In all the conference panels, there were fleeting references to the environmental deadline, but no further elaboration. I did not hear the expression "sustainable development." There was no mention of the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development—the Brundtland Report—to the United Nations Organization. (World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

This Report has been officially adopted by the General Assembly, and the third international conference on its implementation is scheduled for 1992, in Rio de Janeiro.

The Commission worked for three years, during which it held meetings, site visits, and/or public hearings in Indonesia, Norway, Brazil, Canada, Zimbabwe, Kenya, the Soviet Union, Japan, Switzerland, and West Germany. The Commission listened carefully, not only to the experts representing governments and other organizations of all kinds, but also to homemakers, peasants, and aborigines. The thirty-two Commissioners represented twenty-one countries: Norway, Canada, Sudan, Italy, Saudi-Arabia, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Peoples Republic of China, Colombia, India, Brazil, Japan, Guyana, the United States, Algeria, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

Gro Brundtland, then Prime Minister of Norway, chaired the Commission; Mansour Khalid of Sudan was vice-chairperson. From its final meeting in February, 1987, the Commission issued its Tokyo Declaration to "all the nations of the world, both jointly and individually," calling upon them "to integrate sustainable development into their goals and to adopt the following principles to guide their policy actions." The principles were given these titles: (1) renew growth, (2) change the quality of growth, (3) conserve and enhance the resource base, (4) insure a sustainable level of population, (5) reorient technology and manage risks, (6) integrate environment and economics in decision-making, (7) reform international economic relations, and (8) strengthen international cooperation.

Development is essential to the elimination of poverty. Sustainable development, it bears repeating, is development that can continue indefinitely into the human future without generating such constraints as resource depletion, environmental injury, burgeoning human populations, or repression. It would address the urgent problems of present generations

without penalizing future generations. Such sustainable development is *not* proceeding anywhere in the world today.

At its first meeting, the Commission identified eight key issues for special analysis: population, energy, industry, food security, human settlements, international economic relations, decision support systems for environmental management, and international cooperation.

The Brundtland Report carefully inter-articulates the findings of these special studies. It concludes that sustainable development is not only necessary to the human future but possible—refuting the alleged conflict of development with environmental protection that led to the impasse of North and South at the Stockholm Conference in 1972.

The body of the Report is divided into three parts: *Common Concerns*, *Common Challenges*, *Common Endeavors*. Within Common Concerns, the several threats to the planet are isolated and then related, strategic initiatives for sustainable development are designed, and the role of the international economy is critiqued with recommendations for substantial changes. Within Common Challenges are six chapters: population and human resources, food security, species and eco-systems, energy, industry, and cities. Common Endeavors add to all that has preceded: “managing the commons” (the oceans, Antarctica, and extraterrestrial space), achieving a peace that is more than the absence of war, and defining proposals for institutional and legal changes.

The Brundtland Report is inherently a radical document, for all that the Commissioners unanimously endorsed it. Let me illustrate what I mean. Because its recommendations are fully serious, it argues over and over again that sustainable development cannot be achieved from the top down but requires the empowerment of hundreds of millions of people in their villages and workplaces, that there is no chance of success unless the status of women is changed throughout the cultures of the world, that further austerity for the already desperately poor is an impermissible condition for international lending or investment, that the agrarian

reforms that revolutionary movements have demanded can no longer be deferred.

There will be a need for a socialist international, but without delay there is a need for an acknowledged supra-national authority. If peoples everywhere have a fateful stake, say, in halting deforestation, in achieving reforestation, in applying the ecological wisdom of land-use zoning to whole eco-systems, within and transcending national borders, then peoples everywhere must accept a corresponding responsibility for providing nations like Brazil and Indonesia with the kinds of aid that will no longer leave insoluble such internal problems as the poverty of land-hungry peasants displaced from capital-intensive *latifundia* or as reliance upon exporting extracted resources into the unstructured world market to pay the interest on improperly invested loans. Ask not for whom the bell tolls, when it tolls for all.

I suggest that the Brundtland Report be considered by socialists a draft program for their concerted endeavors, the agenda for the foreseeable future that can become *our* agenda—if it is improved by “uncompromisingly critical” but friendly Marxist analysis. I further suggest that socialist political action contribute to the necessary political mobilization of an increasingly effective (before too long a majority) coalition. Nowhere is this more urgent than in the United States.

In the closing plenary session of the Conference, there was agreement that the American left must prevent bi-partisan interventions that seek to destroy every socialist experiment that may be attempted in an increasingly capitalist world. There should be agreement as well to prevent the bi-partisan sabotage of the United Nations efforts to implement the Brundtland Report. There is no greater obstacle to that implementation than the American power elite.

American progressives, socialists among them, carry a fateful responsibility indeed. We must master the strategy, tactics, and ethics of coalition politics—so that in the 1990s a third party will be formed, to become a second party, breaking the bi-partisan control over the nation’s agenda.

In 1948 we tried to build a third party with a coherent platform of projects, relevant to the inseparable issues of “peace, freedom, and abundance.” We had to challenge the bi-partisan inauguration of the Cold War, its monopoly of political advocacy, and its assault on organized labor. Our immediate electoral objective was to register enough of the undoubted dissent from bi-partisan policies so that the dissent would grow. We failed—for many reasons—and the dissent eroded. Among the reasons for our failure was our political immaturity with respect to the “strategy, tactics, and ethics of coalition politics.” In an article I contributed back then (June 1940) to the *Monthly Review* symposium “Cooperation on the Left,” I analyzed our shortcomings and made recommendations.

In 1984 and 1988, the Rainbow effort provided something like an appropriate agenda for political controversy but nothing of this advocacy survived the Democratic Party’s Platform Committee’s surgery at the National Convention. And so, intermittently in our nation’s history, the debate resumes: not so much whether or not but *when* to try again a coalition independent of the Democratic Party.

Without becoming unduly parochial or myopic, I could argue from the deepening human predicament to the indispensable achievement—in the United States, within the next two decades—of a successful new party, of the no longer deferrable realignment in American politics.

Within such a coalition, socialists will earn the influence we deserve and the gratitude, not only of our political associates, but of all the beneficiaries of the coalition’s accomplishments.

In any planet that carries generous mineral fuel and metallic ore deposits and a culture-creating species, a crisis such as we have entered will occur—once and once only. Such a crisis comes to a head due to the effects of evolving technology on the biosphere and to the injuries that classes, races, tribes, and nations—yes, and genders and generations—inflit on one another.

On this, *our* planet, there have been about 1000 human generations since our species survived alone among several hominid species, to become *the* culture-creating species. And only the last 200 generations have been born into hierarchical, class-structured social systems. Five generations, three of them already here, will either win or lose forever the human future. They need socialist guidance. We think we know enough about atoms to know enough about stars to calculate that posterity—if we win—could comprise 200 million human generations, while our sun continues to radiate stably into our cherished biosphere. Concern for posterity has always provided a perspective, inspired the commitment of revolutionists.

At least twenty great, urgent, global problems have emerged in this century, so inter-related that their solutions require orchestration. The environmental, the energy, the population problems are but three of them. There are no single issues any longer. The orchestrated achievement is not only essential; *it is possible*. It can be succinctly identified as nothing less than the road to universal social justice. Indeed, a hundred years later, we can appreciate in a newly informed way that “we have a world to win.”

*Join Monthly Review Associates
and build a socialist library at half price*

Monthly Review Associates receive a 50 percent discount on all MR Press titles, a subscription to *Monthly Review*, a choice of a free book, and Monthly Review's *Newsletter*. For details on the \$50 one-year MR Associate membership write to:

Monthly Review Associates, 122 W. 27 St., NY, NY 10001

CORRESPONDENCE

Two Comments on “Lessons to Be Learned”

by Jack Weston

Two clarifications should be made for Harry Magdoff’s important analysis of lessons for future socialism to be learned from the Soviet experience (MR, February 1991)

(1) “*History* has still to determine whether a class structure is necessary to make an economy work. Clearly, alternative ways have not been explored *in the modern world*.” (p. 8, my emphasis) Magdoff’s qualifications are important, but their implications might be overlooked. There were thousands of years of classless, stateless, non-patriarchal agricultural societies, some large and complex, before the origins of private property. It was, of course, Lewis Henry Morgan who first put forward this view in *Ancient Society* (1877), a book which much impressed Marx (see *Ethnological Notebooks*), who encouraged Engels to write his famous *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884). Since then, evolutionist anthropology has generally supported and amplified Morgan’s thesis. Therefore, we have had the experience of socialism or “primitive communism” several times longer than we have of class society. Socialism has amply proved its social value to our species being. What Magdoff rightly contends is there is no proof that we can make the transition to that beneficial society from a class-based industrial one. My view is that the long ancient experience of socialism is a compelling motive for struggle to realize it again in appropriate new forms.

(2) Magdoff recommends for the transition “a social policy directed towards the ultimate *elimination of differences among the people*.” (p. 15, my emphasis) On reflection we know he refers only to economic or power differences, not to personality, lifestyle, cultural, ethnic, and racial differences. But we who love the vision of libertarian socialism, “an association in which the free develop-

Jack Weston is the author of *The Real American Cowboy*, which presents the cowboy as a frontier worker.

ment of each is the condition for the free development of all," must be particularly careful not inadvertently to support the view that socialism fosters a drab, grey, uniformity of life. Socialism creates, in fact depends upon, the richest individual and group cultural diversity possible. Perhaps rather than "the ultimate elimination of differences" say "the ultimate creation of personal autonomy."

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL

14th Intensive Summer School

7-Day Workshop. Fri. July 12, Mon.-Sat., July 15-20. \$175.

Fundamentals of Marxist thinking and practice presented by teachers, writers, and activists, including Harry Magdoff, Randy Martin, Juliet Ucelli, Stanley Aronowitz, Dennis O'Neill, Charlie Post, Radhika Lal, Derek Lovejoy, and others. Class meets week-day evenings 6:30-10, morning and afternoon on July 20.

And for the First Time:

Master Classes at the Marxist School

Ernest Mandel: Marxist Economic Theory in Today's World

4 evenings, Monday-Thursday, July 8-11, 6-10 p.m.
(with dinner break). \$225. (No single admissions.)

Maria Helena Moreira Alves: Creating New Socialist Politics

5 evenings, Monday-Friday, July 29-August 2, 6-10 pm
(with dinner break). \$225. (No single admissions.)

Enrollment for all events is strictly limited and pre-registration is required. Tuition discounts are possible for anyone taking more than one course. A limited number of scholarships are available for the Intensive Summer School. For a brochure and application, write The Brecht Forum, 79 Leonard Street, New York, NY 10013.

BOOKS

Radical Versus Liberal Environmentalism

by Michael Tanzer

Making Peace with the Planet by Barry Commoner. New York: Pantheon, 1990. \$19.95.

This is an important work which deserves careful reading by progressive people in both the developed and underdeveloped world. Barry Commoner, trained as a biologist and currently the Director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, began laboring in the field of understanding environmental destruction long before it was fashionable. Operating from a radical perspective which enables him to see the problem in its historical economic and political context, he has produced a clearly written and succinct book which manages both to deal with all the important general issues while being chock full of concrete and practical details.

Commoner contrasts two approaches to the causes of environmental problems and ways of overcoming them: the conventional-liberal and the radical. I will examine each in turn, in terms of Commoner's assessment.

The conventional/liberal approach sees the present environmental crisis as basically the result of some combination of population growth and economic growth. In the words of Paul Ehrlich in *The Population Bomb*: "The causal chain of the deterioration [of the environment] is easily followed to its source. Too many cars, too many factories, too much pesticide, multiplying contrails, inadequate sewage treatment plants, too little water, too much carbon

Michael Tanzer is president of Tanzer Economic Associates, Inc., a New York based consulting firm specializing in energy and environmental issues. His most recent book is *Energy Update: Oil in the Late Twentieth Century* (Monthly Review Press, 1985).

dioxide—all can be traced easily to *too many people*.” (p. 143) In short, this view is an updated version of the Malthusian view that population is outgrowing our limited natural resources.

The long run solution to the environmental problem in this view is to limit population growth. In the meantime, however, controls on the dissemination of pollutants are needed. Since this must take place without seriously impeding the workings of the market, the focus is on controlling the spread of pollutants once they have been produced. Thus, in the United States, the principal efforts in the past two decades have come under the regulation of the Environmental Protection Agency, which according to Commoner’s estimates, led to a trillion dollars’ worth of private and public expenditure to improve the quality of water and air and control the spread of toxic wastes. (p. 20) Yet, as Commoner details, the country has little to show for this massive effort. While there has been improvement in some intensively targeted areas, in more places there has been continued deterioration.

The radical approach advanced by Commoner sees the failure to stem the decline of the environment as perfectly understandable, since it does not strike at the core of the problem. In Chapter 1, “At War with the Planet,” Commoner lays out a fundamental contradiction: that between the *ecosphere*, or “natural environment,” and the *technosphere*, the human-created system of production and distribution:

What we call the ‘environmental crisis’—the array of critical unsolved problems ranging from local toxic dumps to the disruption of global climate—is a product of the drastic mismatch between the cyclical, conservative, and self-consistent processes of the *ecosphere* and the linear, innovative, but ecologically disharmonious processes of the *technosphere*. (p. 15)

For example, a stable *ecosphere* is governed by ecological laws such as “everything is connected to everything else” and “everything has to go somewhere.” These ensure that processes are cyclical and do not generate waste. Plants take carbon dioxide from the air and nitrates from the soil, and are eaten by animals, which excrete carbon dioxide into the air and organic compounds to the soil, subsequently converted by microorganisms into nitrates. In the *technosphere*, in contrast, processes tend to be linear and to generate waste which fouls the ecosystem. Nitrogen fertilizers are increasingly applied to crops to increase yields, even though more

and more of the fertilizers drain through the soil as nitrates, which pollute rivers and lakes and water supplies.

More specifically, Commoner sees the present environmental crisis as rooted in relatively recent changes in production technology:

Environmental degradation is built into the technical design of the modern instruments of production

In sum, there have been *sweeping changes in the technology of production since World War II*. Natural products—soap, cotton, wool, wood, paper, and leather—have been displaced by synthetic petrochemical products: detergents, synthetic fibers, and plastics. In agriculture, natural fertilizers—manure and nitrogen-fixing crops—have been displaced by chemical fertilizers; and natural methods of pest control—crop rotation, ladybugs and birds—have been displaced by synthetic pesticides. In transportation, small cars have been replaced by much larger ones, trolley cars by buses, and rail freight by truck freight. In commerce, reusable goods have been replaced by throwaways. These changes have turned the nation's farms, factories, vehicles and shops into seedbeds of pollution. (p. 55, emphasis added)

Moreover, as Commoner points out, the particular production technologies developed in this period were not necessary for economic growth and consumer satisfaction. Contrary to the American myth of consumer as king:

In every case, then, the change in production technology, although it interacts with the market and other relevant social factors, is initiated by the producer and is governed by the producer's interests. In the U.S. economy, the motivation that exclusively governs such investment decisions is increased profit and market share. (p. 80)

By way of example, Commoner cites the switch from small to large cars, justified by Henry Ford II because "minicars make mini-profits." This decision was criticized even by John DeLorean, former GM executive: "When we should have been planning switches to smaller, more fuel-efficient, lighter cars in the late 1960s in response to a growing demand in the marketplace, GM management refused because 'we make more money on big cars.'" (quotes on pp. 80-81) And since larger cars need high compression engines which emit nitrogen oxides, the upshot, for Commoner, is that "Smog is a consequence of the automobile industry's devotion to the 'bottom line.'" (p. 81)

Commoner is well aware that environmental problems are not limited to the capitalist countries:

By far the worst cases of radioactive contamination, of which the accident at Chernobyl is only the most spectacular, have occurred in the Soviet union; Czechoslovakia and Poland have the highest levels of industrial pollutants in Europe, and perhaps the world; the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, have rapidly adopted the same agricultural chemicals that are responsible for polluted water supplies and pesticide-contaminated food in the United States and Europe . . . (pp. 219-220)

But for those who believe that this disproves the idea that capitalist-driven technology is the main environmental culprit, he has a convincing rejoinder:

One reason is that—as the Soviet government now admits—until recently, advocates of social interests such as environmentalism have not been free to comment on, let alone influence, government decisions. A less obvious—but decisive—reason is that most of the systems of production that the socialist countries have adopted were in fact developed in the capitalist countries after World War II: for example, chemical agriculture, nuclear power plants, and the petrochemical industry. Having been developed with no concern for their environmental impact, these production systems wreak their havoc on the environment equally in capitalist countries and the socialist ones. It is, after all, unreasonable to expect that the automobiles produced in the Soviet Union at Togliattigrad, by a plant imported intact from the Italian company, Fiat, would refrain from emitting the same pollutants in Moscow that they produce in Rome—perhaps out of respect for socialism. (p. 220)

In a very illuminating chapter on “Population and Poverty,” Commoner convincingly demonstrates the key role of technology as against the neo-Malthusian “explanation” for the environmental crisis. His basic method is to divide the total amount of pollution generated in producing any commodity into three components: the pollution per unit of the commodity produced (the “technology factor”), multiplied by production of the commodity per capita (the “affluence factor”), multiplied by the size of the population (the “population factor”). Commoner then goes on to show a pattern “typical of the new post-1950 production technologies.” For example, in the 1950-1967 period, when pesticide use for crop production jumped by 266 percent, population increased by only 30 percent and per capita crop production (the affluence factor) by

only 5 percent. The amount of pesticide used per unit of crop production (the technology factor), however, jumped by 168 percent. (p. 150)

Unfortunately, the data for Third World countries are not as detailed as these for the United States, but indirect data indicate a similar pattern. In 90 such countries, where use of nitrogen fertilizer, "a proxy for nitrate pollution," increased annually by 8.6 percent, population rose by only 2.5 percent while per capita crop production actually dropped. Here again, fertilizer use per unit of crop production (the technology factor) increased by 6.6 percent. (p. 152)

Since population is nevertheless one of the three factors which does ultimately affect the level of pollution, Commoner goes on to explore the relationship between population and economic growth. From his examination of the data in this complex area, he comes down decisively on the side of those who believe that poverty causes excessive population growth, rather than the other way around. [MR readers will be pleased to note that part of his case is based on a "remarkable book by Mahmood Mamdani, *The Myth of Population Control*" (Monthly Review Press, 1972). (p. 151)]

As for the other half of the Malthusian argument, that the earth has limited resources, Commoner makes the following profound ecological analysis:

The "limits to growth" approach is based on a serious misconception about the global ecosystem. It depends upon the idea that the Earth is like a spaceship, a closed system isolated from all outside sources of support and necessarily sustained only by its own limited resources. But the ecosphere is not in fact a closed, isolated system, for it is totally dependent on the huge influx of energy from an outside source—the sun. Living things must be provided with energy to sustain their vital processes, in particular growth, development, and reproduction. That energy is derived from the sun . . .

In the abstract sense, there is a global "limit to growth," but this is determined not by the present availability of resources but by a distant limit to the availability of solar energy . . . since matter is, after all, indestructible, the chemical elements that comprise the planet's resources can be recycled and reused indefinitely, as long as the energy necessary to collect and refine them is available . . .

If, let us say, only 10 percent of the total solar energy falling on land could be captured, it would still be possible to expand our present rate of using energy a hundredfold before encountering the

theoretical limit to growth. Even if this figure should turn out to be somewhat optimistic, it seems clear that we are at present nowhere near the limit that the availability of solar energy will eventually impose on production and economic growth. That distant limit is irrelevant to current policy. (pp. 146-148)

From this vantage point, Commoner's hoped-for solution to the environmental crisis flows logically. The key is to change our production technologies. He believes there is ample reason to feel optimistic about the technical possibilities. Actual and prospective developments in solar power, organic farming and integrated pest management, recycling trash, etc., are sufficiently well established in Commoner's view that "the technological basis for the transformation of the present systems of production to ecologically sound ones is largely in hand." (p. 196)

The fundamental obstacle, of course, is that "such a transformation of the systems of production conflicts with the short-term profit-maximizing goals that now govern investment decisions; and that, accordingly, politically suitable means must be developed that bring the public interest in long-term environmental quality to bear on these decisions." (p. 193)

In his concluding chapter, the author lays out what is needed even more bluntly:

As we have seen, our reigning ideology, capitalism, clashes with the reality of the environmental crisis—not to speak of the reality of our country's shameful levels of poverty, and our inadequacies in the areas of housing, medical care and education. We in America have as much reason as the Soviet Union to engage in a *Perestroika* of our own—to open to public discussion the serious conflict between our unexamined capitalist ideology and the failed effort to resolve the environmental crisis—as a prelude to radical (in the sense of getting at the root of the problem) remedial action. (p. 226)

Writing in 1988-1989, Commoner was hopeful that various forces which were operating were coming together to bring about the realistic possibility of such unprecedented radical change. The sudden upsurge of the pro-democracy forces in Eastern Europe and China and the growth of the Green vote in West Germany and the European Parliament, combined with the end of the Cold War to create the possibility of a huge peace dividend to fund the necessary changes in the productive forces. The collapse of the socialist alternative and the present, if perhaps temporary, decline of the Green movement, the pell-mell conversion of pro-democracy forces

into a euphoric embrace of the unfettered market, and the shift of military conflict to North-South, contribute to a gloomier current outlook. In hindsight, Commoner seems optimistic.

But this is a small and understandable shortcoming. Overall, Commoner has provided a lucid and profound critique of the historical capitalist roots of the environmental crisis, and begun the process of thinking through the necessary changes. In cynical and mean-spirited eras, ideologues of self-interest have often hidden behind pseudoscientific tributes to the "value-free" invisible hand. It is both refreshing and heartwarming to see a distinguished scientist like Commoner not only strip away the veil of "scientific objectivity," but also come down on the side of altruism and internationalism. This comes through clearly in his moving discussion of poverty and population:

My own purely personal conclusion is, like all of these, not scientific but political: the world population crisis, which is the ultimate outcome of the exploitation of poor nations by rich ones, ought to be remedied by returning to the poor countries enough of the wealth taken from them to give their peoples both the reason and the resources voluntarily to limit their own fertility.

In sum, I believe that if the root cause of the world population crisis is poverty, then to end it we must abolish poverty. And if the cause of poverty is the grossly unequal distribution of the world's wealth, then to end poverty, and with it the population crisis, we must redistribute that wealth, among nations and within them. (p. 168)

Will Women Have a Say in Deciding the Fate of the Earth

at the United Nations Conference on Environment
and Development in Brazil in 1992?

Yes!

Support and participate in the
World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet
November 8-12, 1991, in Miami, Florida

Write: Congress Coordinator
c/o Women's Foreign Policy Council
845 Third Avenue, 15th floor, New York, NY 10022, USA

The Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II

Fraser M. Ottanelli

"An outstanding contribution to the history of the period. Page after page I relived the passions, the struggles, and the challenges that were our lives. Ottanelli tells the story the way it was!"—Steve Nelson, author of *Steve Nelson, American Radical*

307 pp. Paper, \$14.00; Cloth, \$39.00

Sobukwe and Apartheid

Benjamin Pogrund

"This is a moving story well told. . . . It is based on unique knowledge and documents, written with all the fluency, commitment and authority of the reporter who himself enraged the regime by exposing conditions in South African prisons."—*The Guardian*, London

Leader of the Pan-Africanist Congress, Sobukwe was both a colleague and rival of figures better known today: Tutu, Mandela, and Buthelezi.

416 pp. Paper, \$14.95; Cloth, \$40.00

This Promised Land, El Salvador

Photographs by

Steve Cagan

Text by Beth Cagan and Steve Cagan

Foreword by Dr. Segundo Montes, S.J.

"For the war-hounded refugees of Colomoncagua, whose story Beth and Steve Cagan tell with great sensitivity and respect, utopia was never a pipedream, it was a practical necessity. We are constantly told to keep hope alive. A book like *This Promised Land, El Salvador* gives hope a reason for living."

—Barbara Ehrenreich

220 pp. 7" x 10". 112 b x w illus.

Cloth, \$24.95



NEW IN PAPERBACK

Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman: A Biography

Candace Falk

"Fascinating . . . With marvelous clarity and depth, Candace Falk illuminates for us an Emma Goldman shaped by her time yet presaging in her life the situation and conflicts of women in our time."—Tillie Olsen

420 pp. Paper, \$14.95

Capitalism
Nature
Socialism
A Journal of Socialist Ecology
 ISSN#1045-5752

The only international
 theoretical and political
 journal of socialist ecology -
 including
 ecological Marxism
 and feminism

Issue Seven (II,2) June, 1991

Red Green Politics

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>James O'Connor</i> | Murder on the Orient Express:
Political Economy of the Gulf War |
| <i>Petra Kelly</i> | Reunification and the German Greens |
| <i>Christian Thurner</i> | Economics of the U.S. Greens |
| <i>Jamie Swift</i> | How Green is the New
Democratic Party? |
| <i>Roberto Monte-Mor</i> | Struggles in Amazonia |

Science and Ecology

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Marcello Cini</i> | Science and Sustainable Society |
| <i>Volker Heins</i> | Critique of Von Gleich on
Genetic Engineering |
| <i>Ken'ichi Miyamoto</i> | Japanese Environmental Policies
Since World War II |
| <i>Joan Martinez Aliet</i> | Andean Ecology and
Socio-Economic History |
| <i>Greenpeace Vancouver</i> | Sweden's Forest Crisis |

Poems-Reviews

Please make check payable (in U.S.
dollars) to: Guilford Publications

Mail Payment to:
 Capitalism, Nature, Socialism
 Guilford Publications
 Attn: Journals Department
 72 Spring Street
 New York, NY 10012

Annual Subscriptions (3 issues)

Individuals:

- \$15 domestic
- \$19 foreign (surface mail)
- \$27 foreign (airmail)

Institutions:

- \$45 domestic
- \$57 foreign (includes airmail)
- Single Issues: \$10

All orders outside the U.S., Canada, and Mexico should be placed with Guilford Press, c/o the Distribution Centre, Blackhorse Rd., Letchworth, Herts, SG6 1HN, United Kingdom.

(Continued from inside front cover)

Age of Imperialism, Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. These and other MR books, taken together with the magazine's running month-by-month discussion and analysis of world developments and crises, have led to the international recognition of what has come to be known as the Monthly Review School, a vibrant tendency within the overall corpus of Marxism.

This record of achievement of which we feel justly proud contrasts sharply with the meager material base of the MR enterprise. From the very beginning it has led a hand-to-mouth existence—in a chronic financial bind, always dependent on the generosity of the magazine's subscribers who at the peak in the mid-1970s were never many more than 10,000 and are now down to about half that number. The editors' salaries are less than half the average wage of the unionized staff; contributors to the magazine receive a token payment of \$50 for an article. We have never received a penny from a private foundation or a publicly supported agency that funds literary or cultural activities.

Against this background, it has obviously been impossible for MR to do the kind of things that often are taken for granted in a capitalist publishing enterprise. Perhaps the deprivation we feel most keenly is that we have not been able to do what we have often dreamed of, i.e., make long-term plans for future books and articles based on an assessment of the country's educational needs in the areas of our competence. We have in mind particularly the need for a whole series of short, authoritative, clearly written works on subjects that need to be understood in some depth if one is to make critical sense of the daily outpourings of the print and electronic media. We hope that what we are publishing now, most of which comes to us quite spontaneously, makes some contribution to this end. But we are painfully aware of how much more could be done if adequate resources were available.

All of which is by way of explaining why MR is in the process of raising its fund-raising efforts to a higher level than in the past. We believe that the magazine and the press have earned the right to be considered among the unique assets of the left here and abroad. Additional funding is needed just to keep them going, and the amounts that could be productively used to improve and expand their operation is, for all practical purposes, unlimited. What you give to MR should be considered first and foremost an investment in the future of the American left. And we are as confident as we ever were that in the final analysis the future of the country as a whole depends on the future of the left.

Errata. An alert reader has drawn our attention to the omission of a decimal point in the comments on "Kerala State, India: Radical Reform as Development." The correct figure for migration from Kerala, referred to on page 39 of the January issue, is 2.5 percent of the state's population.

The price of the cloth edition of Ira Gollobin's *Dialectical Materialism: Its Laws, Categories, and Practice* was incorrectly noted in our review of the book ("Philosophy as Science," May 1991). The correct price is \$31.40 for the cloth edition, which is available from Riverrun Press, 1170 Broadway, New York, NY 10001.

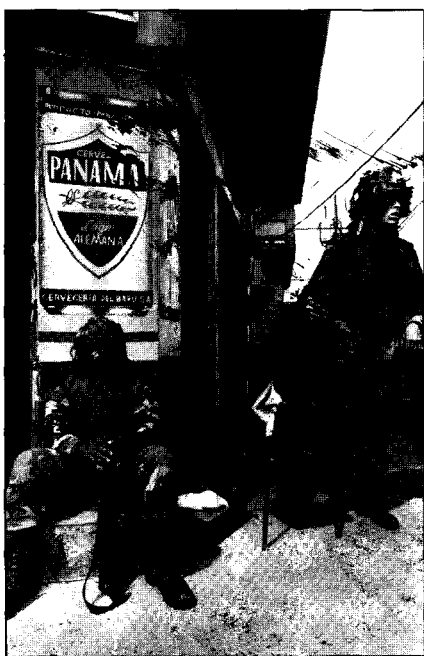
LATIN AMERICA BUREAU

PANAMA

Made in the U.S.A.

John Weeks and Phil Gunson

Those who want to understand the New World Order will



naturally turn for enlightenment to the first major example of aggression in the post-Cold War era...John Weeks and Phil Gunson provide a succinct and informed analysis of the U.S. invasion of Panama, its background and its aftermath. Their study could hardly be more timely, and the lessons more instructive."

—Noam Chomsky

\$8.00 PB8162 paper (distributed by):

Monthly Review Press

122 West 27th Street • New York, NY 10001 • (212) 691-2555